



Press Release

## HE WANTED TO TURN THE SKY UPSIDE DOWN

Homage to Paolo Cotani

7 – 25 September 2021

Berlin – Lugano – Rome – Turin

2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the death of the artist Paolo Cotani. This September, the Paolo Cotani Association has invited each of the three galleries that have served as a reference point for Cotani's work to remember him with a comprehensive exhibition.

The Paolo Cotani Association, which is committed to cataloguing and promoting the artist's work, is delighted to announce *He Wanted to Turn the Sky Upside Down*, an exhibition that takes place from 7 to 25 September, simultaneously in four cities: Berlin and Rome at Galerie Rolando Anselmi; Lugano at Primo Marella Gallery; and Turin at Mazzoleni.

The exhibition is structured as a tribute by the three galleries via four anthological exhibitions that together display an overview of Cotani's practice from the mid-1970s, with works linked to the Pittura Analitica movement, to later productions from the first decade of the 2000s.

The exhibition is accompanied by a critical text by Daniela Ferraria and an excerpt from the artist's "Scritti".

GALERIE | **ROLANDO ANSELM**I

**PRIMO MARELLA GALLERY**  
MILANO - LUGANO

  
**MAZZOLENI**  
LONDON – TORINO



In Cotani's practice, the constant tension in the execution of his work is evident along with the extreme rigour of his artistic making.

In his working process, there is an aspect of concealment in the overlapping of the layers of paint, for example in the "Passaggi" or in the segments of torn maps in "Cartografie". This aspect seems even more explicit in the overlapping of the "Bende", where the surface of the painting is created by the repetition of the gesture of wrapping bandages around the frame.

In the work of "Fili Battuti", the thread is no longer there, but it has left a trace of clear marks on the painted canvas, an imprint that indicates an absence.

There is a close relationship between the artist and the canvas, his work has a very physical component, with the gesture measured by the extension of the arm, the element of time marked by repetition.

The work is executed in long strokes and his measured gestures create an accumulation of paint with various passages of colour as in the "Cancellazioni", where each brushstroke conceals the one below.

In the evocative images of the "Nuvole", two different planes of visual perception create images — on a broadly textured background, a network of dense, aerial brushstrokes is created.

It is in the ambiguity of vision, in the request for a slow-perceived reading that Cotani at once expresses himself and remains hidden.

Cotani's work is always on the edge of paradox and ambiguity, where it is not possible to indicate a single main thoroughfare.

Each gesture, as well as each cycle of works, is revealed by its duplicity, allowing opposites to coexist in a path studded with oxymorons and contradictions, where the spectator is always forced to question their own certainties in a centripetal movement.

To camouflage and to reveal are constant in his practice, and his final productions express both energy and inertia.

One example is the "Bilancieri", where Cotani explores the permanent tension of art, upsetting our certainties.

Daniela Ferrara



From the *Scritti* (Writings) – 28th October 1970

“More and more frequently we have asked ourselves the question whether painting still makes sense, or rather whether the scope of the message still guarantees that degree of incidence which legitimises its historicity. [...] I believe it is correct to try to understand the category in which pictorial research moves [...] in order to attempt to rediscover in its specificity an operative and creative capacity within the multiplicity of linguistic universes. And if language is an autonomous universe, it is only within the multiplicity of its laws and contradictions that it is valid: painting is planning and planning is a way of intervening in reality. Someone has compared the artist to a miner digging a tunnel in a mountain [...]. I believe rather that the work of the artist is like a sensitive seismograph, often anticipating what might be called the meteorological scale of collective friction. If the ‘mountain image’ is removed, it will only be by working collectively: this is not a lack of confidence in the means of painting, but a choice of method.”

Paolo Cotani

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From 7 to 25 September

Associazione Paolo Cotani  
Galerie Rolando Anselmi

Primo Marella Gallery  
Mazzoleni

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